

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
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INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 02670

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, GW, GE, WB
SUBJECT: GAUS INTERVIEW IN "SPIEGEL": THE BUNDESTAG
DEBATE

REFS: (A) BONN 2069; (B) BONN 1841

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GAUS INTERVIEW IN "SPIEGEL" WAS THE
SUBJECT OF A LARGELY PRO FORMA BUNDESTAG DEBATE YESTER-
DAY IN THE COURSE OF WHICH WISCHNEWSKI DISTANCED THE
GOVERNMENT FROM SOME OF GAUS' "FORMULATIONS." END
SUMMARY.

1. THE POLITICAL CONTROVERSY OVER THE "SPIEGEL"
INTERVIEW WITH STATE SECRETARY GAUS, FRG PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE TO THE GDR, (REFS A AND B) BURNED ITSELF
OUT IN A GENERALLY LISTLESS TWO HOUR BUNDESTAG
QUESTION PERIOD AND DEBATE ON FEBRUARY 10. STATE
MINISTER WISCHNEWSKI FROM THE CHANCELLERY AND OTHER
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GOVERNMENT SPEAKERS FIRMLY DENIED OPPOSITION ACCUSA-
TIONS THAT THE INTERVIEW REPRESENTED A KIND OF TRIAL
BALLOON CONCERNING POSSIBLE FUTURE FRG CONCESSIONS TO
THE GDR IN THE AREAS OF GERMAN NATIONALITY AND THE
INNER-GERMAN BORDER. HOWEVER, IN DOING SO, WISCHNEWSKI
DISTANCED THE GOVERNMENT FROM SOME OF THE SPECIFIC
FORMULATIONS USED BY GAUS IN THE INTERVIEW.

2. REBUTTING AN ARRAY OF REPETITIVE OPPOSITION QUESTIONS, WISCHNEWSKI SAID THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE INTERVIEW IS CLEAR AND GAUS KNOWS AND AGREES WITH THOSE POSITIONS. HOWEVER, IN THE COURSE OF HIS REPLIES, WISCHNEWSKI ADDED THAT "PERHAPS NOT EVERY FORMULATION" IN THE INTERVIEW IS DIRECTLY IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY. DESCRIBING SOME OF GAUS' POINTS AS "JOURNALISTIC CONCEPTS," WISCHNEWSKI ADDED THAT "IN THIS INTERVIEW, THERE WERE CERTAINLY JOURNALISTIC FORMULATIONS WHICH DO NOT PLEASE US." ASKED WHETHER THE INTERVIEW HAD BEEN CLEARED BY HIM, WISCHNEWSKI RESPONDED THAT GAUS HAD MENTIONED THE FACT OF THE INTERVIEW TO HIM ON THE TELEPHONE BUT THEY HAD NOT DISCUSSED THE CONTENT.

3. IN REMARKS DURING THE FOLLOW-UP DEBATE, OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN BLASTED GAUS FOR TOYING WITH IDEAS WHICH WERE NOT ADMISSIBLE IN INNER-GERMAN DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS AND EXPRESSED THE SUSPICION THAT THE GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO BE SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO CIRCUMVENT THE 1973 DECISION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT AS IT REGARDS GERMAN NATIONALITY AND THE BORDER. CDU/CSU INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN ABELEIN CHARGED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS WALKING ALONG THE OUTER EDGE OF THE BASIC LAW.

4. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN REBUFFED THE CHARGES
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COUNTERING THAT THE OPPOSITION WAS ONLY TRYING TO MAKE POLITICAL CAPITAL IN ITS ATTACKS AND HAD NO ALTERNATIVE POLICIES TO PROPOSE. IN THAT REGARD, SPD FRAKTION CHAIRMAN WEHNER ACIDLY TAUNTED THE OPPOSITION, ACCUSING IT OF WANTING ONLY TO BRING ON A CRISIS. THEY HAD NEVER WANTED THE TREATIES OR THE RELATIONS WITH THE GDR. THEY HAD NOTHING TO SUGGEST, ONLY OPPOSITION.

5. COMMENT: IN A LARGELY PRO FORMA DEBATE, BOTH SIDES READ THEIR LINES AS EXPECTED. THE MOST NOTABLE FEATURE WAS THE CAREFULLY CALIBRATED AMOUNT OF DAY-LIGHT THAT WISCHNEWSKI PUT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND GAUS. THIS MAY MEAN THAT GAUS' TENURE AS FRG PERMREP IN EAST BERLIN MAY BE LIMITED, BUT THE GOVERNMENT PRESUMABLY CANNOT REPLACE HIM AT A TIME WHEN HE IS UNDER SUCH PRESSURE. END COMMENT.
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